

Shaw Middle School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Shaw community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

Why this school?

Shaw met the primary criteria for closing described below, with a 38% five-year enrollment decline and a 2006 enrollment of 333. Garnet-Patterson and Shaw are within a half mile of each other, and Garnet-Patterson is significantly under-enrolled. While both buildings require complete modernization, Shaw's open plan configuration and enormous square footage creates substantial facility deficits that would make immediate consolidation difficult. Garnet-Patterson has traditional classrooms, an auditorium, a cafeteria, a new gym, and easy access to the recreation department field adjacent to nearby Garrison Elementary.

What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

Shaw met both primary criteria with a sharp enrollment decline and a very low enrollment that leaves the building at less than half capacity. The facility does not serve students well, although the adjacent park site is an asset that the District. With a more traditional school facility nearby, it does not make sense to maintain the current educational program within the Shaw facility.

What other options have been considered?

Consolidation of Shaw and Garnet-Patterson was the main option. While both schools are underenrolled, the enrollment decline at Shaw has been more severe. Garnet-Patterson is better situated in the short term to serve as a consolidated middle school site. The long-term option of which site would serve as a better modernized middle school is still being explored.

What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and

strive to build upon them in the new school environments. Schools have also spent time and effort to cultivate community partnerships that have produced a variety of educational benefits to students. We want to maintain these relationships and find ways in which we can continue these partnerships.

How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Shaw currently does not have funding for art, music, or physical education teachers. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

How does the restructuring process affect the school closure and reorganization proposal?

The NCLB restructuring process does not affect the school closure proposal. Twenty-seven DCPS schools, including Shaw and Garnet-Patterson, were identified under NCLB as in need of restructuring. Those schools in restructuring are currently in the quality review process to determine what fundamental programmatic changes need to be made to ensure high quality instruction and results. Restructuring schools are going to receive aggressive and targeted interventions designed to have an immediate affect on student achievement and school environment.

How will the new Gifted and Talented program be implemented at Garnet-Patterson?

Implementation strategies for the Gifted and Talented program will have to be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward. Implementation of a program will include a clear timeline for phasing in the program, professional development for staff, and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

Will schools with new programs still be neighborhood schools?

Yes. While some new programs will serve both neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, receiving schools will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

What is the status of my school's modernization plan?

One of the open questions in our current proposal is where the ultimate site of a new Garnet-Patterson/Shaw will be. The Master Facilities Plan did not make a specific recommendation, and we plan to engage the community before making that decision.

What facility improvements will be made to the receiving schools before the start of school?

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments of all receiving schools to identify priority improvements before the 2008-09 school year.

Is the receiving school ready for more students?

Garnet-Patterson can accommodate 474 students and currently serves 206 students, 100 of whom are currently eighth graders and will therefore be attending high school in the fall. If all of Shaw's 65 rising eighth graders opt to attend Garnet-Patterson/Shaw, there will still be ample space for the new sixth graders who will attend from all of the area elementary schools.

What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or

another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain “fixed costs,” such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open two buildings that are under-enrolled (Garnet-Patterson is currently at 43% capacity; Shaw would be at 29% with a 6th grade) we are spending that money in both of those buildings, when the students could all be accommodated in one. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Shaw, our annual fixed costs are \$1,358,000.

How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we intend to implement the proposal in the Master Education Plan that calls for building feeder patterns around elementary schools. Moving forward, all students who attend a particular elementary school – whether they are in boundary or out of boundary – will be assigned to the same middle and high schools by virtue of having attended that elementary school. Families will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-boundary schools. Some of the schools that currently feed Garnet-Patterson are proposed to be part of the Ward 5 PK-8 feeder pattern, and will not feed a separate middle school.

How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Shaw and for students currently living in those boundaries but not attending that school.

IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Garnet-Patterson/Shaw• Preference in OOB lottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Garnet-Patterson/Shaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guaranteed spot at Garnet-Patterson/Shaw• Preference in OOB lottery• Guaranteed spot at current assigned school

New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

Why are higher performing schools slated for closure over lower performing schools?

The school reorganization plan was developed as a comprehensive plan that considers the needs and impact of not only the local school, but schools within the surrounding cluster, feeder pattern, and system as a whole. Thus, program performance was not by itself a factor for determining the best use of a school facility. Where there are successful programs or partnerships that support strong academic performance, the Chancellor will seek to maintain that high performance by moving the stronger program and resources to a receiving school, thereby benefiting a greater number of students.

How does the restructuring process affect

How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

The Shaw and Garnet-Patterson schools serve many of the same neighborhood students. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Because Shaw serves middle grade children, walkability was not considered a significant issue.

Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from Shaw. We believe that sufficient walkability has been preserved.

Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

Will the students affected by these closing be exempt from future closings?

Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption

as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.

Stevens Elementary School

Over the past month, Chancellor Rhee, Deputy Mayor Reinoso, and their staff have listened to the questions and concerns shared by the community regarding the proposed reorganization plan. The questions and concerns of the Stevens community have been taken seriously, and below are detailed responses to the issues raised.

Why this school?

Stevens met the primary criteria for closing described below, with a 28% five-year enrollment decline and 2006 enrollment of 236. Although Stevens and Francis are less than one half mile from each other, both serve primarily out-of-boundary students, so walkability is not a current consideration. Consolidation into Francis provides Stevens students with needed assembly space, office space, and outdoor play space not possible at the constricted Stevens site.

Consolidation with Francis puts the Francis building to better use. Francis has a fixed seat auditorium, a cafeteria, a gym, and a separate wing and entrance possible for early childhood sections as well as playground space, recreation center playing fields, a Department of Parks and Recreation outdoor pool and adjacent tennis courts, and sufficient parking.

What data were used to make this recommendation?

The primary analysis focused on enrollment data at all schools – schools that had both a consistently declining enrollment greater than most other schools and an overall enrollment that was lower than most other schools were identified for closure or consolidation. A second level of analysis was then applied to those schools that considered student growth projections, isolation and geographic factors, walkability issues, characteristics of likely receiving schools, and overall impact to the neighborhood, surrounding school cluster, and DCPS system as a whole.

Stevens' steadily declining and low enrollment made it a candidate for closure. Additionally, Stevens is located in an area that has a very small student population; only 8% of Stevens students live in-boundary or within a half mile of the school. The facility itself, while historic, offers little in terms of amenities, no green space, and requires significant renovation.

What other options have been considered?

The planning team considered whether to maintain Stevens as a stand-alone school that could partner with either Francis or School Without Walls. However, the lack of a neighborhood student population combined with serious facility limitations made this option unsustainable. Consolidating Stevens and Francis as a PK-8 school will offer Stevens students a more comprehensive educational program.

What will happen to existing successful programs?

Over the years, many schools have developed unique components of their program that have made the school a positive learning environment. The Chancellor and her team will work hard to preserve these program elements and strive to build upon them in the new school environments. Schools have also spent time and effort to cultivate community partnerships that have produced a variety of educational benefits to students. We want to maintain these relationships and find ways in which we can continue these partnerships. The partnership with George Washington University will be maintained and strengthened at the new Stevens-Francis school.

How will this plan improve the learning environment?

By focusing more resources on fewer schools, we will be better able to support academic achievement. This plan will allow schools to receive the staff and resources they need to better serve students. For example, Stevens currently does not have funding for art, music, or physical education teachers, and only has a part-time librarian. Added resources will allow schools to hire full-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Schools will also be able to hire the appropriate clinicians and practitioners, like social workers and psychologists, to serve and support students and their families.

What will happen to special education programs in my school?

We are committed to ensuring that students with special needs are effectively served in a new environment. In all cases we will work with families of students with special needs to ensure that all IEP requirements are met and that children and their caregivers are comfortable with their new placement.

How will the new grade configuration at Stevens-Francis be implemented?

Implementation strategies for new PK-8 program will have to be developed at the school level and with parent input. Once a final program decision is made, a team of stakeholders, including central office staff, school level staff, and parents will consider options and develop a timeline for moving forward.

Implementation of the PK-8 configuration will include a clear timeline for professional development for staff and appropriate resources for students and classrooms.

Will Stevens-Francis still be a neighborhood school?

Yes. While Stevens-Francis will serve neighborhood students and draw students from across the city, it will continue to be the school of right or neighborhood school for the corresponding neighborhoods.

Will DCPS central offices move to save money?

In an effort to utilize our resources efficiently and effectively, we are exploring ways in which we can save money without affecting the quality of education provided to students. This definitely includes the possibility of moving the central administration offices.

What will happen to teachers and staff?

With the normal annual attrition we expect to make these decisions related to the reorganization plan without significant staffing decreases. Once a final decision has been made as to which schools are closing, the Chancellor can begin to make staffing decisions. In cases where strong teams have demonstrated good results, we will work to keep that team together. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to consider new placements or new roles of interest to them within DCPS, according to the transfer rights of their respective contracts. We will ensure all staff are notified of changes before the end of the school year.

How will younger children deal with being in a school with older kids?

In a school with a successful PK-8 program, older students and younger students interact positively in a community of learners. Older students mentor younger students, preparing them to be leaders in both their school environments and greater communities. Moreover, older students will have come up through the same ranks as their younger counterparts, creating a continuous learning community in which safety and respect are paramount.

Will there be separate administrators for older and younger students in PK-8 schools?

Yes. While Stevens-Francis will have one principal that oversees the continuum of services provided at the school to ensure continuity, additional administrators will focus on particular age groups to ensure that appropriate services are being provided to students. Stevens-Francis will also ensure that, where appropriate, the suitable staff is brought to work with the appropriate age groups.

Will there be appropriate academic programming for middle school aged students in PK-8 schools?

We want to ensure that middle grade students in Stevens-Francis have the same opportunities as they would in a regular middle school program. This will include class offerings such as algebra and world languages. Students in PK-8 schools will be prepared to make a successful transition to high school and to take advantage of specialized high school programs.

Is the receiving school ready for more students?

Francis can accommodate 520 students and currently serves 165 students, 94 of whom are currently eighth graders and will therefore be attending high school in the fall. There is ample space to accommodate the 231 current PK-6 Stevens students as part of a PK-8 program.

Beyond basic capacity, there are several key modifications that will be necessary to welcome elementary students to the building. These include retrofitting some of the bathrooms to accommodate small children, installing playgrounds for early childhood and intermediate grades, and creating pre-K and kindergarten classrooms with bathroom facilities and storage space accessible to small

children. The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization is conducting assessments regarding the feasibility of completing this work before school begins in August.

What will happen to class size at receiving schools?

All schools are expected to adhere to the policies set forth in the Washington Teachers Union contract with DCPS. The contract outlines the policies related to the working conditions of teachers that stipulate the acceptable class size. A copy of the contract can be found on the DCPS website at www.k12.dc.us.

What will happen to the building after it is vacated?

We intend to use buildings for the benefit of our city, supporting educational needs first. For example, a school property could be used to house an early childhood or adult education program, a student and family health center, or another city agency. Should any building have an interim period during which it is not in use, we fully intend to take the reasonable steps to secure and protect city properties. The Mayor has no plans to sell the property or allow it to fall into disrepair or unmonitored use.

How will closing the building save money? How much money will be saved?

When we operate a school building, regardless of how many students there are in that school, we pay certain “fixed costs,” such as utilities and the cost of a principal. By keeping open two buildings that are under-enrolled (Stevens is currently at 71% capacity; Francis would be at 48% with a 6th grade) we are spending that money in both of those buildings, when the students could all be accommodated in one. That means less money to go towards teachers and programming. In the case of Stevens, our annual fixed costs are \$504,000.

How will this affect the feeder patterns in my community?

As part of this reorganization, we intend to implement the proposal in the Master Education Plan that calls for building feeder patterns around elementary schools. Moving forward, all students who attend a particular elementary school – whether they are in boundary or out of boundary – will be assigned to the same middle and high schools by virtue of having attended that elementary school. Families will continue to have the opportunity to apply to out-of-boundary schools. In the case of Stevens-Francis, students will attend the school from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. No additional middle school students will be assigned to Stevens-Francis.

How will this affect the school boundaries in my community?

For the 2008-09 school year we will institute an interim boundary policy. Students attending a school proposed for closure (whether the student is currently in-boundary or out-of-boundary) will be assigned one or more schools of right nearby. These students will also have preference in the out-of-boundary (OOB) lottery for the 2008-09 school year. Students will be expected to pre-register in the spring to reserve a spot at their new school, when relevant.

The chart below explains what the interim 2008-09 policy will be for students currently attending Stevens and for students currently living in the boundary but not attending the schools.

IN BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING	IN BOUNDARY AND NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING	OUT OF BOUNDARY AND CURRENTLY ATTENDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Stevens-Francis • Preference in OOB lottery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Stevens-Francis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed spot at Stevens-Francis • Preference in OOB lottery • Guaranteed spot at current neighborhood school

New elementary school boundaries will be developed across the city and will go into effect for the 2009-10 school year. When the new boundaries go into effect in 2009, all students attending a school – whether from in or out of boundary – may continue to attend that school for as long as they wish.

Why are higher performing schools slated for closure over lower performing schools?

The school reorganization plan was developed as a comprehensive plan that considers the needs and impact of not only the local school, but schools within the surrounding cluster, feeder pattern, and system as a whole. Thus, program performance was not by itself a factor for determining the best use of a school facility. Where there are successful programs or partnerships that support strong academic performance, the Chancellor will seek to maintain that high performance by moving the stronger program and resources to a receiving school, thereby benefiting a greater number of students. While the overall Stevens program cannot be considered high performing, there are partnerships and elements that we will seek to maintain at the new Stevens-Francis school.

How will DCPS address the issue of turf wars when you put different communities into one school?

Because both Stevens and Francis serve primarily out-of-boundary students already, this issue is not a significant safety concern. DCPS will work to ensure that the receiving school communities, including the students, staff, and parents, are integrated effectively and that the communities have opportunities to meet with and engage each other. Planning for the consolidation will begin immediately.

This plan changes the traffic and walking patterns for my family – we will now have to cross very busy intersections and this poses a major safety concern. How will DCPS address this safety issue?

Students at Stevens already travel an average of over 4 miles to attend school. Parents can choose neighborhood schools that are closer and more convenient for their children if this issue is important to them. We will work closely with the Department of Transportation to ensure that busy streets have the appropriate speed controls and school crossing guards.

Were walkability and traffic studies conducted?

Walkability and traffic issues, including street and geographic boundaries that created isolation problems for some schools, were considered thoroughly. Every effort was made to ensure that walkability for neighborhood elementary schools was maintained with this proposal. Because of the great distance that Stevens students already travel, however, walkability was not a primary concern in the analysis.

Will transportation be provided for students from the schools that will be closed?

At this time, we are not considering transportation for students from Stevens. We believe that sufficient walkability has been preserved for the few neighborhood students who will attend Stevens-Francis.

Will there be another round of school closings?

We have no plans at this time to conduct another round of school closings. As part of ongoing educational planning, however, the administration will continually analyze the organization of the school system and the usage of facility resources to ensure that we are making the best educational opportunities available to all District students.

Will the students affected by these closing be exempt from future closings?

Every effort is being made to ensure that students experience as little disruption as possible, including minimizing the number of school moves that a child experiences as he or she matriculates through the system.

Why wasn't the community consulted earlier in this process?

Both the Master Education Plan and the Master Facilities Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, recommended and planned for school closures and consolidations. The Chancellor's plan builds upon those earlier recommendations, utilizing up-to-date analysis and data, as well as months of engagement with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to identify the needs of the school system and the best path for moving forward. It is important to reiterate that this is a proposed plan. Before any final decision is made by the Chancellor or Mayor, the proposed plan will have been vetted through three rounds of facilitated community meetings held in December and January and a series of special community meetings on January 17. This process was developed with the intention of providing an opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposed plan and to raise any concerns or issues that may have been overlooked.

How will DCPS involve parents and the community moving forward?

We believe it is extremely important to have consistent dialogue with the community as an ongoing practice, but particularly as we move forward with this process. The input that parents and the community have shared during these community meetings, including input that will be shared at the special community meetings to be held on January 17, will inform a final plan to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Mayor by the end of January. The final plan will be posted on the DCPS and DC.GOV websites and available at all schools.